



SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 11, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS:

Georgia Hanigan, Commissioner, Payette County
Nate Marvin, Commissioner, Washington County (in attendance via videoconference)
Tom Dale, Commissioner, Canyon County - present
Kelly Aberasturi, Commissioner, Owyhee County - present
Viki Purdy, Commissioner, Adams County – present (in attendance via videoconference)
Sam Summers, MD, Physician Representative – present (pending confirmation)
Bryan Elliott, Commissioner, Gem County - present

STAFF MEMBERS:

Nikki Zogg, Katrina Williams, Rachel Pollreis, Jaime Aanensen, Doug Doney, Troy Cunningham, Clay Roscoe, Ashley Anderson, Ricky Bowman, Jordan Seward, Stephen Fitzner

PUBLIC COMMENT

Board members heard public comment from those in attendance wishing to speak.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elliott called the meeting to order at 9:46 a.m.

DISCUSSION

Opening remarks

Nikki Zogg, Southwest District Health Director, provided opening remarks and background information. She explained that prior to COVID-19 staff allocated their time to jobs in their individual programs or specific areas. During the COVID-19 response staff have been pulled in other directions to respond. During this meeting, staff will provide insight into where they are currently working, what the next few months may bring, and the impact the response has on the rest of Southwest District Health's business.

Chairman Elliott summarized a phone call with two members of Governor Little's COVID-19 task force. The task force members suggested SWDH consider limits on social gatherings and require seating in bars.

COVID-19 Situation Update (Epidemiologic Picture)

Nikki Zogg provided several high level observations as to what is happening with the data for the region Southwest District Health serves. She reported that new daily cases appear to be stabilizing. Case numbers have bounced a bit partly due to batch sending of lab results which causes some fluctuation in daily case rates. Businesses are also doing some mass testing which impacts the daily case rate.

Long term care facilities throughout the region have been impacted by COVID-19 cases. To help better understand these cases within long term care facilities, some facilities' ventilation systems are being reviewed by an industrial hygienist. The environmental samples take about ten days to come back. Based on those observations, interviewing some of the staff, and reviewing infection control practices it appears they may be opportunities for improvement to provide a safer environment for staff and residents.

Nikki also anticipates the industrial hygienist visiting several facilities that are doing well in protecting staff and residents against COVID-19 to help determine best practices.

Rachel Pollreis, SWDH data analyst, provided a brief description of the SWDH COVID-19 dashboard. Chairman Elliott asked if number of cases recovered is available on the website. All cases over 30 days old not resulted in death are considered recovered. Rachel will add the number of cases recovered to the SWDH website.

Nikki explained that SWDH is receiving a lot of media about disparities in Hispanic communities being affected. Clusters linked to workplaces and large social gatherings are impacting our communities' Hispanic population heavily.

Board members discussed Vitamin D, Zinc and hydroxychloroquine. Commissioner Purdy asked if the SWDH Board of Health can make a motion to push use of hydroxychloroquine forward as a treatment and allow doctors to prescribe it as needed. Dr. Roscoe and Dr. Summers referenced the most current published research and do not support the use of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 disease. Dr. Roscoe will prepare information summaries regarding Vitamin D, Zinc, and hydroxychloroquine.

White House Profile & SWDH Health Alert Levels

The updates included in the White House Profile categorize certain counties or cities into red or yellow zones. This might create confusion within the Southwest District Health COVID-19 Health Alert Level risk assessment categorization system. There is also some confusion with aligning the School Framework for risk assessment with the Southwest District Health COVID-19 Health Alert Level system. Board members discussed whether it might be more consistent to use a three level system rather than four. Nikki explained that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been using three levels of community transmission. A lot of municipalities and others are also using four alert levels. Board members discussed school decisions and the fact that schools are independent political bodies that choose to be open or closed and which system to use. The role of SWDH has been helping schools identify which category of transmission they each are in and providing subject matter experts to review plans and answer questions.

Overview of Southwest District Health Response to COVID-19

Southwest District Health continues to function under Incident Command Structure to manage the COVID-19 event response and also continue daily operations for the agency.

Public Information Officer (PIO)

Currently, SWDH has approximately 1.5 FTE staff hours dedicated to the PIO Team. The PIO team is responsible for creating and enabling communication, developing accurate statements to release to the public or press, collaborate with external and internal partners to develop public service announcement messaging in both English and Spanish. Other tasks include attending and facilitating daily and weekly meetings, research, media monitoring, developing and vetting press releases, project planning and development, coordination of internal and external partner needs.

Liaisons

Staff are working in liaison roles with schools, shelters, jails, long term care facilities, and event coordinators to promote safe practices and allow for optimal wellness in their communities. The communities within the six-county region of Southwest District Health are expecting guidance, recommendations, expertise, and best practices. The liaison team has been successfully coordinating connections to resources.

Operations

Operations Team reports directly to the incident commanders who get information from the agency administrator on what is happening, the current or anticipated needs, and objectives for the next operational period.

Logistics

The Logistics team works alongside Idaho Department of Emergency Management to distribute PPE. In addition to PPE distribution, community assistance is also a logistics duty. The team also works alongside SWDH epidemiologists to determine who receives COVID-19 test kits.

Currently, approximately 71 employees are supporting the COVID response. Of these 71 employees, 26 roles are filled with new temporary staff members; 45 roles are supported by SWDH employees already in place at the beginning of the pandemic response.

Future priorities for logistics include helping and assisting for vaccine distribution and facilitation.

Finance

Troy Cunningham, SWDH Financial Manager, gave a brief overview of the responsibilities of the finance section for the SWDH COVID-19 response. One challenge is juggling COVID-19 financial duties with day-to-day operations needed to keep SWDH running. Troy hired a temp yesterday who will assist in some of those functions that Troy's team cannot get to so they have resources available to assist Troy in the COVID-19 response activities.

Troy explained that based on the funding we have in hand we can sustain operations through the end of the fiscal year before we would need to dip into districts investment funds.

Anticipated Impact of COVID-19 in coming months

Nikki Zogg provided information about the anticipated impact of COVID-19 in the coming months. She explained that the district is discussing how to move forward with the needed SWDH activities and work functions while still trying to meet existing needs of our communities during this unprecedented time.

Board members discussed how to balance pandemic response with other duties, programs and services of the agency and continue providing the work we were before providing COVID-19.

Board members agree that there remains no consideration for a shutdown of businesses in the future. The economy is important to people's mental health as well as their physical health and board members do not desire to shut down business and implement an additional quarantine.

Business Impacts and Financial Considerations

Doug Doney explained that the General Support Services Division includes 17-18 people supporting about 120 people staff now including human resources, accounting, financial, information technology, and facilities management support. Early on in the pandemic response our agency underwent a big push to move staff to work remotely. General Support Services staff is working to provide the same level of support to the entire agency including new temporary staff.

The most important thing is understanding of the fact that COVID-19 will not go away any time soon and many SWDH staff will be carrying out two different jobs for foreseeable future.

Carol Julius explained that Clinic Services revenue declined with the decrease in services offered and is now coming back up. She shared a success of less no-show appointments for WIC and diabetes consultations due to the implementation of telehealth visits.

Jaime Aanensen shared that the demand for Environmental and Community Health Services is continuing to grow and revenues remain steady. Some of her division's staff have been pulled into response roles and are working really hard to juggle demands from their day-to-day jobs with their additional COVID-19 responsibilities. Jaime expects to need to increase staffing to meet the demand as well as provide the needed support efforts for COVID-19.

High Focus Results and Benefits

Nikki presented information on support provided by High Focus to assist county emergency managers and health district staff in their response.

When this event first started High Focus was brought on board to provide support as a technical advisor. High focus is paying specific attention to county emergency manager requests and functioning as a conduit to SWDH.

Commissioner Elliott suggested that today is a good demonstration as to people taking the ball and running, as far as staff, longer than what was anticipated and probably with information that might not be of high benefit to us as board members. He asked staff to consider focusing on what does their response effort mean to the people and what does it really mean in the outcome and how does it affect our decision making? He also wants to know what is being accomplished.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Nikole Zogg
Secretary to the Board

Approved as written:



Bryan Elliott
Chairman

Dated: August 25, 2020